

# FISHERINSIGHT

## Improving Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility

Walking is the oldest, most basic, and arguably the most beneficial form of human transportation. Walking provides many important personal and societal benefits, including reduced air pollution and health benefits from increased physical activity.

However, these benefits are being compromised by the growing number of pedestrian fatalities in the United States, which has increased 27 percent from 2007 to 2016, while at the same time, all other traffic deaths decreased by 14 percent. With the number of pedestrian fatalities in the United States growing substantially faster than all other traffic deaths, pedestrians now account for a larger proportion of traffic fatalities than they have in the past 33 years.

In June of 2016, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced New York State's first-ever, comprehensive Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). The five-year, multi-agency initiative provides \$110 million to improve safety for pedestrians through infrastructure improvements, public education efforts and enforcement across Upstate New York and Long Island. The New York State Pedestrian Safety Action Plan will run through 2021 and is being implemented cooperatively by the New York State Department of Transportation focusing on engineering improvements, the State Department of Health conducting public education and awareness campaigns, and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee coordinating increased law enforcement.

The PSAP calls for a systemic approach to address widespread pedestrian safety issues and minimize crash potential by implementing low-cost countermeasures throughout the roadway network, both local and state jurisdictions. NYSDOT has begun pedestrian safety improvements on state-owned roadways at approximately 2,000 uncontrolled crosswalks (no signals or stop signs) and 2,400 signalized intersections. Fisher Associates is on the forefront of this initiative as a team member on the NYSDOT Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Contract for Regions 1, 2, 7 and 9. Under this contract, Fisher is working with the Region 7 Traffic Safety & Mobility staff analyzing approximately 150 uncontrolled and 100 controlled pedestrian crossings. We are conducting field assessments to inventory existing conditions, analyzing the collected information and proposing recommendations to improve pedestrian safety for uncontrolled crosswalk locations and signalized intersections.



The PSAP also includes \$40 million of federal HSIP funds to implement systemic pedestrian safety projects on local urban roads and streets. These projects, administered by local municipalities, are eligible to receive up to 100% federal HSIP funding to implement improvements.

Improvements at crosswalks without traffic signals or mid-block crossings generally include pavement markings and signs, pedestrian refuge islands and attention-grabbing lighted beacons.

At signalized intersections, improvements include high visibility crosswalk markings; signal enhancements via extended crossing times, countdown timers that tell pedestrians how many seconds they have to finish crossing the street during the flashing red hand/Don't Walk phase, and leading pedestrian intervals that help make pedestrians more visible to motorists by giving them a head start before traffic can turn onto the street.

The PSAP initiative is complimented by the NYSDOT's American with Disabilities Act Transition Plan which commits to providing ADA accessible facilities statewide. As the State addresses the rehabilitation and replacement of its infrastructure, pedestrian facilities are brought into compliance with current standards. In addition, municipalities must establish ADA compliance plans that outline their programs for improvements to bring their facilities into compliance.

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